



Those who choose to paddle the Missouri River in canoes and/or kayaks need to be well prepared for the adventure. Only experienced paddlers should plan to be on the river. The quickly changing weather, potential high waves, long distances between launch sites and current can create major problems for novice paddlers.

The Missouri River is the longest river in the United States. Before the dams were built, floods were a common occurrence. Although a hardship to many European settlers, the floods provided an important exchange of nutrients between the river and the flood plain. The floods also replenished the backwaters and helped move sandbars that are critical habitat areas for many wildlife species.

Fort Randall Dam at Pickstown impounds Lake Francis Case. This lake is 107 miles long and has a maximum depth of 140 feet.

The large lakes created by the dams have helped walleye, white bass, smallmouth bass and salmon flourish while they have reduced the number of sturgeon and paddlefish, which are adapted to a river environment that was largely eliminated by dams.

Piping plovers and least terns are endangered species that nest along this stretch of the river beginning in mid-May. By late August, adult birds and their young leave nesting areas to migrate south. Studies have shown that any kind of human disturbance near or in these areas can cause parents to abandon their nests or young. Even if only for short periods, eggs and nestlings may die.

Walking and dragging watercraft on sandbars and islands can crush the inconspicuous eggs and chicks. Free-roaming pets can disturb birds or destroy eggs or chicks.

Please help preserve this special but vulnerable part of our natural heritage by heeding posted warning signs, and leaving areas where birds appear disturbed or agitated. Failure to do so can lead to declines in these already rare species and prosecution for violating federal and state wildlife laws. Bald eagles also roost and nest along the river. Please stay at least 1/4 mile away from any nests.

SD Missouri River

Canoe/Kayak Map

Pickstown to Running Water

Services Available

- Randall Creek Recreation Area - Camping
- Pickstown, SD - several businesses
- Niobrara State Park - Camping

Useful Websites:

For SD state park information -
www.sdgap.info/Parks

For road maps - www.sddot.com/PE/data

For current water conditions -
<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/sd/nwis/rt>

For more information, please contact:

North Point Recreation Area
38180 297th Street
Lake Andes, SD 57356
(605) 487-7046
Email: NorthPoint@state.sd.us

Niobrara State Park, NE
(402) 857-3373

For more information on canoe trails or additional brochures, please write:

Division of Parks and Recreation
Department of Game, Fish and Parks
523 E East Capitol • Pierre, SD 57501
(605) 773-3391

Web: www.sdgap.info/Parks
Email: parkinfo@gfp.state.sd.us

For information on the Missouri National Recreational River, call:

O'Neill, NE office: (402) 336-3970 or Yankton, SD
office: (402) 667-2550
Web: www.nps.gov/mnrr

This brochure is a cooperative effort with the SD Department of Game, Fish and Parks, the SD Department of Health and the National Park Service.

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SD Missouri River

Canoe/Kayak Map

Pickstown to Running Water



***South Dakota Department of
Game, Fish and Parks***

Two sections of the river in South Dakota are protected as segments of the National Wild and Scenic Recreational Rivers System. Together they comprise the Missouri National Recreational River, a unit of the National Park System. A 59-mile stretch runs from below Gavins Point Dam to Ponca State Park in Nebraska. A 39-mile section extends between Pickstown to Running Water. This map covers the 39-mile section.

PRIVATE PROPERTY

Most of the land adjacent to the river is private property. On other than public land, landowner permission is needed to be on the land. In Nebraska, the adjacent landowner owns all land, including sandbars and submerged lands, to the middle of the channel.

LOW IMPACT

One of the key reasons most people paddle is to experience the beauty of the outdoors. To help protect the environment, please adhere to the following principles:

- Carry In/Carry Out - Leave no garbage, yours or other people's, in the water or on the land.
- Camp 200 feet or more away from the water.
- Cut no living trees or pick any plants.
- Use a camping stove instead of having an open fire. Leave no flame unattended.
- When the need arises, bury your human waste at least six inches deep, one hundred feet or more from the water. Carry out your toilet paper.
- Try not to disturb wildlife.
- Leave the site better than you found it. Remove all litter.

BASIC SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Be competent swimmers and have each person in the watercraft wear a PFD that fits properly.
- Don't overload with either passengers or gear. Store gear in waterproof containers.
- Boating alone is not recommended. If you go alone, let someone know your launch and take-out points as well as your estimated arrival time.
- Read maps. Plan ahead and be off the water by dusk.
- Go the speed of the slowest watercraft so all stay together.
- Fasten all ropes so there is no danger of being entangled if you overturn.

- The river is difficult to navigate due to changing sandbars and snags. The wind is also an issue on most days. While the normal rate of flow is 2-3 mph, the river can have a current of 7 mph when the dams are releasing water. Know your paddling ability and don't exceed it. This river is for experienced/expert paddlers only.
- Beware of overhanging trees, logjams, brush piles, and other obstacles that the water flows through rather than around. You can be pinned against them, possibly under the water, by the force of the current. Plan far ahead and pass them on the safe side. If it looks like you are going to bump into the obstruction, do not push away with your paddle as that is a quick way to capsize!
- In most cases, if you overturn, stay with your watercraft as it will float. Don't try to stand in a fast current. Float downstream on your back, feet first, with your toes out of the water. This will keep your feet from getting caught on the bottom.
- If others spill, go after the paddlers. Rescue watercraft and equipment only after the people are safe and recovery of the items can be done safely.
- Cold water can be paralyzing to both mind and body. Know proper procedures for cold water paddling if going on the water in spring and/or fall.
- Know how to identify poison ivy and rattlesnakes and avoid them.
- Car top racks must be strong and securely attached to the vehicle. Each end of the vessel must be attached to the vehicle.

The SD Department of Health recommends that you bring the following:

- Water - drink plenty of water before, during and after paddling
- Insect repellent - protect yourself from the bites of ticks and mosquitoes
- Sunscreen of 15 SPF or higher - protect your skin from the sun's rays
- Small first aid kit - be prepared for emergencies
- Healthy snacks - high energy foods (granola, fruits and energy bars)
- Appropriate clothing and footwear - weather conditions can change quickly

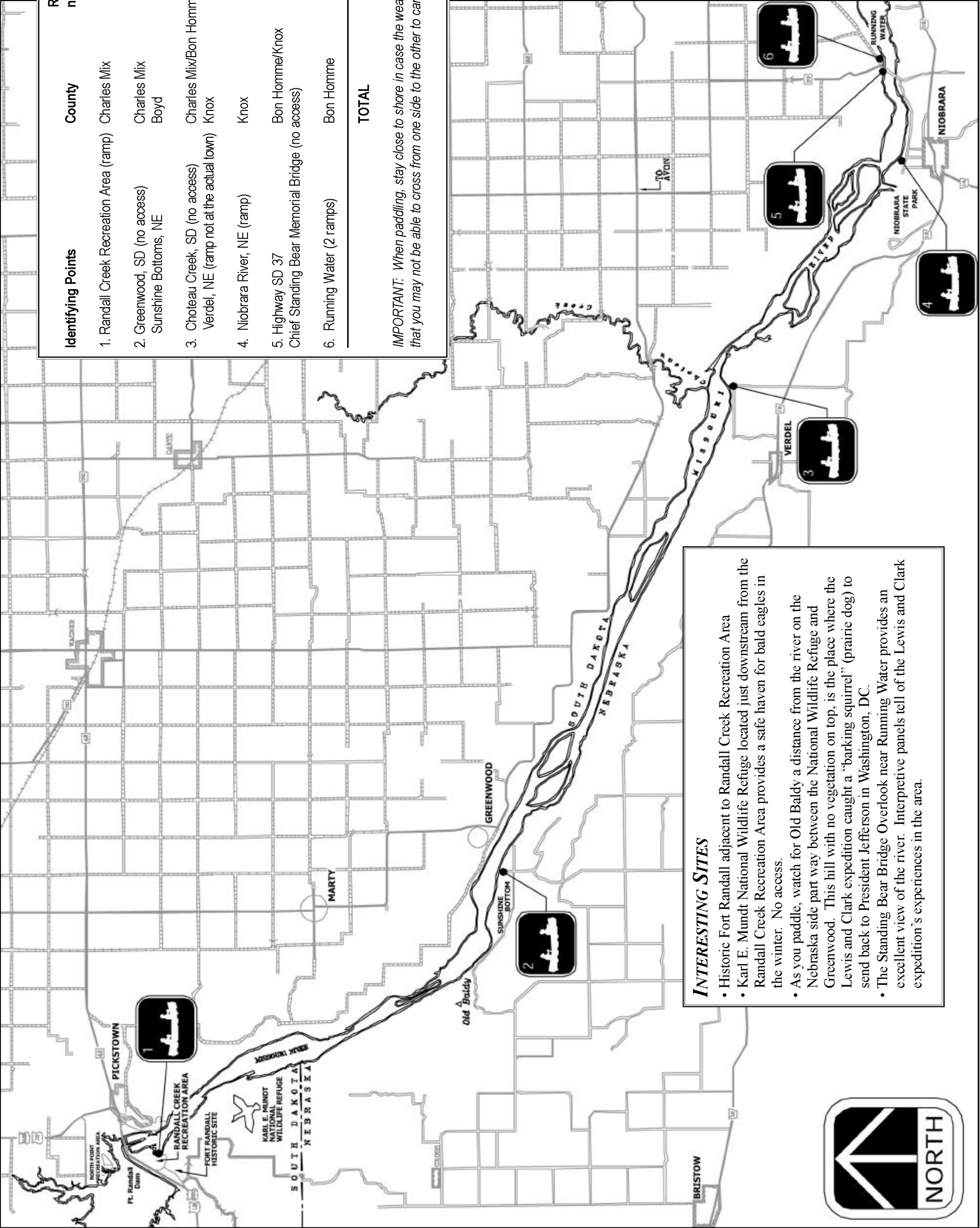
DAY TRIP CHECKLIST

South Dakota law requires that non-motorized boats over 12 feet long, including canoes and kayaks, be licensed in South Dakota or another state.

The registration decal must be shown on each side of the bow. Paddlers are encouraged but not required to display license numbers on their watercraft for easier identification, to provide more theft protection and to operate in other states that require affixed license numbers.

Every person in the watercraft must have a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device that fits properly, is readily available, and is in good and serviceable condition.

- ☐ Paddles, plus an extra
- ☐ Waterproof maps
- ☐ Bailing bucket or sponge
- ☐ Ropes for bow and stern
- ☐ Long-sleeved shirt and long pants for each person
- ☐ Change of clothes
- ☐ High energy snacks/food (*enough for several days if stranded due to weather conditions*)
- ☐ Water (*fill containers before arriving at the launch site as there may not be water available - have enough water for several days if stranded due to weather conditions*)
- ☐ Tent/Sleeping bags and other camping items needed if stranded due to weather
- ☐ Hat
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Sunscreen lotion - 15 SPF or higher
- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ Matches
- ☐ Rain gear
- ☐ Trash bags
- ☐ First-Aid kit
- ☐ Toilet articles
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Pocket knife
- ☐ Optional:
 - Camera (in waterproof case)
 - Binoculars
 - Fishing equipment
 - Swimsuit
 - Bandana (multiple uses)



Identifying Points	County	River mileage to next identifying feature
1. Randall Creek Recreation Area (ramp)	Charles Mix	13
2. Greenwood, SD (no access) Sunshine Bottoms, NE	Charles Mix Boyd	15
3. Choteau Creek, SD (no access) Verdel, NE (ramp not at the actual town)	Charles Mix/Bon Homme Knox	8
4. Niobrara River, NE (ramp)	Knox	2
5. Highway SD 37 Chief Standing Bear Memorial Bridge (no access)	Bon Homme/Knox	1
6. Running Water (2 ramps)	Bon Homme	—
TOTAL		39 miles

IMPORTANT: When paddling, stay close to shore in case the weather changes. Realize that you may not be able to cross from one side to the other to camp or replenish supplies.

INTERESTING SITES

- Historic Fort Randall adjacent to Randall Creek Recreation Area
- Karl E. Mundt National Wildlife Refuge located just downstream from the Randall Creek Recreation Area provides a safe haven for bald eagles in the winter. No access.
- As you paddle, watch for Old Baldy a distance from the river on the Nebraska side part way between the National Wildlife Refuge and Greenwood. This hill with no vegetation on top, is the place where the Lewis and Clark expedition caught a “barking squirrel” (prairie dog) to send back to President Jefferson in Washington, DC.
- The Standing Bear Bridge Overlook near Running Water provides an excellent view of the river. Interpretive panels tell of the Lewis and Clark expedition’s experiences in the area.